

Rural Referral Center



THE **RURAL REFERRAL CENTER (RRC) PROGRAM** was established to support high-volume rural hospitals that treat a large number of complicated cases.

Rural Referral Center Program Requirements

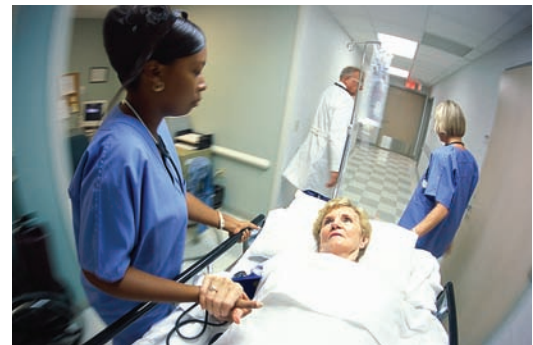
The *Code of Federal Regulations* under 42 CFR 412.96 contains a full description of the criteria for RRCs. In general, a Medicare participating acute care hospital is classified as a RRC if it meets ONE of the following criteria:

- 1) The hospital is located in a rural area AND has the following number of beds available for use:
 - Has 275 or more beds during its most recently completed cost reporting period. If the hospital's bed count has changed, written documentation may be submitted with the application regarding one or more of the following:
 - The merger of two or more hospitals
 - Acute care beds are reopened that were previously closed for renovation
 - Acute care beds are transferred to the Prospective Payment Systems that were previously classified as part of an excluded unit or
 - The hospital expands the number of acute care beds for use and these beds are permanently maintained for inpatients. Such expansion does not include beds in corridors or other temporary beds.

- 2) The hospital shows the following three elements:

- At least 50 percent of the hospital's Medicare patients are referred from other hospitals or from physicians who are not on the staff of the hospital
- At least 60 percent of the hospital's Medicare patients live more than 25 miles from the hospital and
- At least 60 percent of all services the hospital furnishes to Medicare patients are furnished to patients who live more than 25 miles from the hospital

A hospital that does not meet the criteria discussed above can alternatively be classified as an RRC if it is located in a rural area and meets the criteria specified in paragraphs 1) and 2) AND at least ONE of the criterion specified in paragraphs 3), 4), or 5) listed on the following page.



- 1) Its case mix index for discharges during the most recent fiscal year ending at least one year prior to the beginning of the cost reporting period for which the hospital is seeking RRC status is at least equal to one of two case mix figures calculated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in accordance with the *Code of Federal Regulations* under 42 CFR 412.96(c)(1)(ii).
- 2) The number of discharges is at least equal to 5,000 (3,000 for an osteopathic hospital) or a threshold amount set by CMS, in accordance with the *Code of Federal Regulations* under 42 CFR 412.96(c)(2). CMS uses data from the latest available cost report data.

- 3) More than 50 percent of the hospital's active medical staff are specialists who meet the conditions specified in the *Code of Federal Regulations* under 42 CFR 412.96(c)(3).



- 4) At least 60 percent of all discharges are for inpatients who reside more than 25 miles from the hospital.
- 5) At least 40 percent of all inpatients treated at the hospital are referred from other hospitals or from physicians not on the hospital's staff.

HELPFUL RURAL HEALTH WEBSITES

CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES' WEBSITES

CMS Contact Information Directory
www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/contacts/

CMS Forms
www.cms.hhs.gov/CMSForms/CMSForms/list.asp#TopOfPage

CMS Mailing Lists
www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/maillinglists/

Critical Access Hospital Provider Center
www.cms.hhs.gov/center/cah.asp

Federally Qualified Health Centers Provider Center
www.cms.hhs.gov/center/fqhc.asp

Hospital Provider Center
www.cms.hhs.gov/center/hospital.asp

HPSA/PSA (Physician Bonuses)
www.cms.hhs.gov/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/

Internet-Only Manuals
www.cms.hhs.gov/Manuals/IOM/list.asp#TopOfPage

MLN Matters Articles
www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/

Medicare Learning Network
www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo/

Medicare Modernization Update
www.cms.hhs.gov/MMAUpdate/

Physician's Resource Partner Center
www.cms.hhs.gov/center/physician.asp

Regulations & Guidance
www.cms.hhs.gov/home/regsguidance.asp

Rural Health Clinic Provider Center
www.cms.hhs.gov/center/rural.asp

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS' WEBSITES

Administration on Aging
www.aoa.gov

American Hospital Association Section for Small or Rural Hospitals
www.aha.org/aha/key_issues/rural/index.html

Health Resources and Services Administration
www.hrsa.gov

National Association of Community Health Centers
www.nachc.org

National Association of Rural Health Clinics
www.narhc.org

National Rural Health Association
www.nrharural.org

Rural Assistance Center
www.raconline.org

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The Medicare Learning Network (MLN) is the brand name for official CMS educational products and information for Medicare fee-for-service providers. For additional information visit the Medicare Learning Network's web page at www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo/ on the CMS website.

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